ISAAC BLACKFORD,

INDIANAPOLIS, INDIANA.

Isaac Blackford, for thirty-five years a judge of the Supreme Court of Indiana, was born at Bound Brook, Somerset county, New Jersey, November 6, 1786. It is to be regretted that little or nothing is known in regard to the ancestry of Judge Blackford on his father's side. On the side of his mother he was of Holland descent. Her maiden name was Mary Stauts. The father died when the son was quite a lad, probably not far from twelve years old. When seventeen years old his mother sent him to Princeton College, from which he was graduated four years afterward with high honors. He began the study of law in the office of Col. George McDonald, where he remained a year, and then entered the office of Gabriel Ford, in Morristown. He was admitted to the bar in 1810. About this time, because of a general depression in business throughout the East, and because of the glowing accounts received from friends already in the West, of the beauty of the country and fertility of the soil, also on account of the prospect of an early settlement of the Indian troubles, a tide of emigration had already set in for what was known then as the "Wabash Country."

Young Blackford caught the spirit, and bidding farewell to home and friends he set his face westward. This was at the close of the year 1811. Indiana was yet a territory. He came first to Brookfield, then to Salem. Upon the organization of Washington county, in 1813, of which Salem was made the capital, Mr. Blackford was chosen its first clerk and recorder. In after years, in referring to those early days, he used to say that his principal duty was the recording of marks. As live stock for the most part ranged at large, each farmer had his own distinctive mark, which he placed upon the ear of each animal. These marks were convenient for identification, but a public record of the same was necessary to constitute a legal claim. The next year Mr. Blackford was elected clerk of the territorial legislature, then in session at Corydon. He was re-elected to this office in the following August, but resigned on being appointed judge of the first judicial district. He then removed to Vincennes, and in the fall of 1815 resigned the judgeship and opened a law office. In 1816 he was elected a representative from Knox county to the first Legislature under the State government. There were many men in that body who afterward became distinguished in the history of Indiana, among whom were James Noble, Amos Lane, John Dumont, Williamson Dunn, Davis Floyd, Samuel Milroy and Ratliff Boon; but even at that early day Judge Blackford's reputation for judicial fairness was so well established that he was chosen speaker of the house without a contest. In 1817 Governor Jennings appointed him a judge of the supreme court, a position which he graced and honored for the next thirty-five years.

About this time young Blackford returned to New Jersey and was married to the accomplished daughter of Colonel McDonald, in whose office he first began the study of law. He brought his wife to Vincennes, where he thought to make a permanent home, but she lived but little more than a year. Mrs. Blackford was not only the idol of her husband, but of all who were so fortunate as to have enjoyed her acquaintance. She left an infant son, to whom they gave the name of George, after the maternal grandfather. The father spared no pains in the training and education of his motherless boy, whose natural endowments, as his years increased, gave promise of a bright future. But in this the father was doomed to disappointment, for, while yet in the flower of his youth, George Blackford, a favorite among his young friends, was cut down by disease. He died at Lexington, Kentucky, when about twenty-one years of age.

Judge Blackford regarded Vincennes as his home for many years after he came to Indianapolis to live, and every year he spent a part of his time in that place. On one of his trips to Vincennes on horseback, he came very

near losing his life. Mounted on a stout horse, with overcoat, leggings, and saddlebags full of law books, he undertook to ford White river near Martinsville, while the river was much swollen by a freshet. He and his horse were swept down the stream a great distance, but eventually they landed on an island. It was several hours before he reached the mainland. He was rescued by a farmer who had heard his outcries. Having dried his law books and clothing, he waited a couple of days for the water to fall low enough for him to cross the river with safety, and then proceeded on his journey. For the most part he made these stated journeys by the old stage coach lines that ran between Indianapolis and Vincennes, by way of Terre Haute. At certain seasons of the year, by reason of heavy rains and much travel, the roads became almost impassable; so that the real trials of the ill-fated stage passenger, as well as the horseback rider in those early days, can hardly be exaggerated.

Judge Blackford was five feet and nine inches in height, very erect, with a neat, trim, lithe figure, He was quick and active in motion and graceful in bearing. His face was long, yet well proportioned, and was marked off with intelligence, sensibility and refinement. He was upright and honest in his dealings, a model of integrity and purity of character. He had great reverence for the Sabbath, and nothing could swerve him from his purpose to do no work on that day.

The Judge occupied for many years a large room in the old building which used to stand in the Governor's Circle. It was plainly furnished, but contained everything necessary for his comfort. There were three tables in it, and these were always loaded with books. William Franklin, a colored man still living, used to sweep the room, make the fires and render whatever other service was needful. He was with Judge Blackford twelve years, and says that during that time he never saw him in a passion, nor heard him utter an angry word. Franklin nursed the Judge when he was sick and attended to his few wants when he was well, and so had the best of opportunity for knowing him as he really was.

Mr. John S. Spann, of Indianapolis, a life-long friend of the Judge, in a private letter writes: "Judge Blackford was a hard student and a hard worker. He did not count the hours. He slept little and ate little. In his nature and character he was kindly, ingenuous and irreproachable. In his taste he was refined and scholarly. I aided him as a printer and proof-reader in printing the seventh and eighth volumes of his Indiana Reports. The eighth was his last, and I do not think any law book ever had more careful work upon it." It is said of his habits in study, that when overcome by fatigue and lack of sleep, his head would often fall forward on his desk through sheer exhaustion; also after long and unremitting labor he would often sleep thirty-six or forty-eight hours without intermission. He was not a member of the church, but attended religious services wherever his taste inclined him. He was a believer in the Christian religion. In short, he was a modest, firm and conscientious man, and withal an incorruptable judge. He was economical in habits, plain in dress, and unostentatious in manner. He was shy in deportment, avoided discussions and made no enemies by his manner, or in his treatment of men. He was a constant reader and had an extensive and excellent miscellaneous library. He took the leading American and foreign magazines and carefully read them. He was not a rapid thinker or powerful reasoner, but his sense of justice, his ability to weigh legal arguments and his untiring perseverance in the investigation of cases put him in the front rank of Indiana judges, and there he will stand.

Judge Blackford took little or no interest in party politics, but in 1825, without being consulted, he was put forward as a candidate for governor, and was defeated by James Brown Ray by a majority of two thousand six hundred and twenty-two votes. In 1826, he was a candidate for United States senator, but was beaten by William Hendricks by a single vote. Judge Blackford was originally a Whig, and in 1832 he voted for Clay, but in 1836 he supported Van Buren for the presidency and afterward acted with the Democracy. He hated slavery and during his whole life his influence was against it. Although the ordinance ceding the Northwestern Territory to the United States provided that slavery should never exist in the territory or the states formed from it, it was covertly introduced. Laws were passed authorizing the bringing of negroes into the territory, and providing for apprenticing males until they were thirty-five years old and females until they were thirty-two. Children of colored persons born in the territory might be apprenticed until the males were thirty and the females twenty-eight years old. The law also provided that slaves found ten miles from home without permission of their masters might be taken up and whipped with twenty-five lashes. Congress was petitioned to suspend the sixth article of the Ordinance of 1787, prohibiting slavery in the territory, but without effect. General Harrison was Governor of the territory and approved of all these measures. He took into his confidence such men as Waller Taylor, Thomas Randolph, and other immigrants from Virginia, who were pro-slavery men of the most decided type. Judge Blackford hated slavery in all its forms and early allied himself with the free state party, led by Jonathan Jennings. He held General Harrison responsible for the effort to make Indiana a slave territory, and when the general became a candidate for president, in 1836, Judge Blackford refused to support him. His action in the matter put him outside the Whig and into the Democratic party.

Although recognized as a man of wealth, Judge Blackford bestowed little or no thought on the making or spending of money. His ideal of the judgeship was so exalted that he purposely eschewed business entanglements lest in any way such connection should unfit him for the discharge of his official duties. In this, as in other things, he was misunderstood. When the Terre Haute and Richmond railroad was first projected he refused to take stock in the enterprise. For this he was severely criticised. But he did not deign to give the reason for his course. To a special friend, however, he expressed some surprise that his detractors could not understand that by becoming an interested party he would be incapaciated to sit on the bench in case the railroad should be brought into court. Judge Blackford was critical and exact in all his work. He possessed and cultivated what has been called "the pride of correctness," an accomplishment that was little appreciated in the early days of Indiana, when legal battles were fought in log schoolhouses. In justice be it said, however, that in these log-house encounters there was no lack of forensic ability and profound knowlege of the law. But true to his life-work, in his written opinions and reports of the supreme court the orthography must be perfect and the punctuation faultless before the manuscript left his hands. He has been known to stop the press to correct a single word. One who knew him well says: "He paid as much attention to a comma as to a thought."

Blackford's Reports consisted of eight volumes, the first appearing in 1830 and the last in 1850. The first volume contained opinions extending over ten years of the court's creations. Chancellor Kent is reported as saying that it was "replete with extensive and accurate law learning." While each of these volumes was in press the judge had a standing reward with the printers for the discovery of any errors. He exposed the proof sheets in the supreme court-room, with the request that all errors be noted on the margin of the page on which they occurred. The story is told that ex-Governor Porter detected an error in the use of the word "optionary," and that several months afterwards Mr. Porter received from the governor the appointment as reporter of the supreme court, to succeed Mr. Carter recently deceased. In tendering his acknowledgements he was referred to Judge Blackford, who had recommended his appointment on the specific ground of the discovery of the above noted error. Blackford's Reports may be said to have been revisions of the decisions of the supreme court. He selected only such opinions as he regarded as just on the general principles of the law, and it is said that "he did not hesitate to correct the opinions of his associates or even to remodel them." By reason of this free and wise treatment these reports were accepted as high authority wherever the courts recognize the common law as the rule of action. Since Judge Blackford's time a law has been passed requiring all the opinions to be reported; consequently the authority of our supreme court is not relatively so high as it was when its decisions were known only through Blackford's Reports.

In 1853, his term of supreme judge having expired, he opened an office in Indianapolis for the practice of law; but he had served so long in the capacity of a judge that he was not at home at the bar and longed to be again upon the bench. The opportunity soon came. In 1855, on the organization of the court of claims at Washington, President Pierce appointed him one of its judges, saying he knew no man in the party better fitted to aid in its organization. Judge Blackford held this office until his death, which occurred in Washington, December 31, 1859. He discharged the duties of the judgeship in a way that added luster to a name already illustrious, and died the best known and most eminent jurist Indiana has ever produced. When Judge Blackford's death became known, a meeting of the Indiana congressional delegation was held at Washington, to take appropriate action in regard to it. Hon. Albert G. Porter, then the representative from the Indianapolis district, in a speech delivered on that occasion, said:

"It is hardly possible, sir, for persons who reside in an old community to appreciate to the extent to which, in a new country, the character of a public man may be impressed upon the public mind. There is not a community in Indiana, not a single one, in which the name of Judge Blackford is not a household word. He has been identified with our state from the beginning. He may almost be said to be a part of our institutions. Judicial ability, judicial purity, approaching near to the ideal of the divine; private worth, singularly blending the simplicity of childhood with the sober gravity of age—these were represented, not simply in the mind of the profession, but in the universal popular mind of Indiana, in the person of Isaac Blackford."

At the same meeting General William McKee Dunn, then the representative from the Madison district, said:

"For more than a quarter of a century Judge Blackford occupied a seat on the supreme bench of our State. He has done more than any other man to build up our jurisprudence on the broad foundations of the common law. His reports are not only an honor to him, but to the State of Indiana also. It has been well said here that he was an 'upright judge,' and not only was he so in fact, but so careful was he of his judicial character, and so regardful of all the proprieties of his position, that he was universally recognized and esteemed as an 'upright judge.' Indiana is proud of her great jurist, but today she mourns the loss of her most eminent citizen; and now by her united delegation in congress claims that all that is mortal of Isaac Blackford may be entrusted to her care, and

REFERENCE
DO NOT CIRCULATE

sepulture in her bosom. Let his body be borne back to the State with whose judicial history his name is inseparably connected, and there at its capital let him be buried, where those from all parts of the State who have so long known, revered and loved him, may visit his tomb and pay affectionate tribute to his memory."

On Thursday, January 13, 1860, while the Democratic State Convention was in session, Governor Willard announced to the convention that the remains of Judge Blackford had reached Indianapolis and were then lying in state in the Senate chamber. He also said that the judge's funeral would take place that afternoon and invited the delegates to view the remains and attend the funeral. On the same day the Indianapolis bar held a meeting in reference to his death, at which Judge Morris presided, and John H. Rea acted as secretary. John L. Ketcham, chairman of the committee on resolutions, reported a series, including the following, which were unanimously adopted:

"Resolved, That while we receive, in the profoundest sorrow, the announcement of the decease of the late Honorable Isaac Blackford, we cherish for his memory the highest regard, acknowledging that he has contributed more than any other man in Indiana to the high character of her judicial reputation; that such judges are a blessing to any State, and deserve to be held in great respect by all the people.

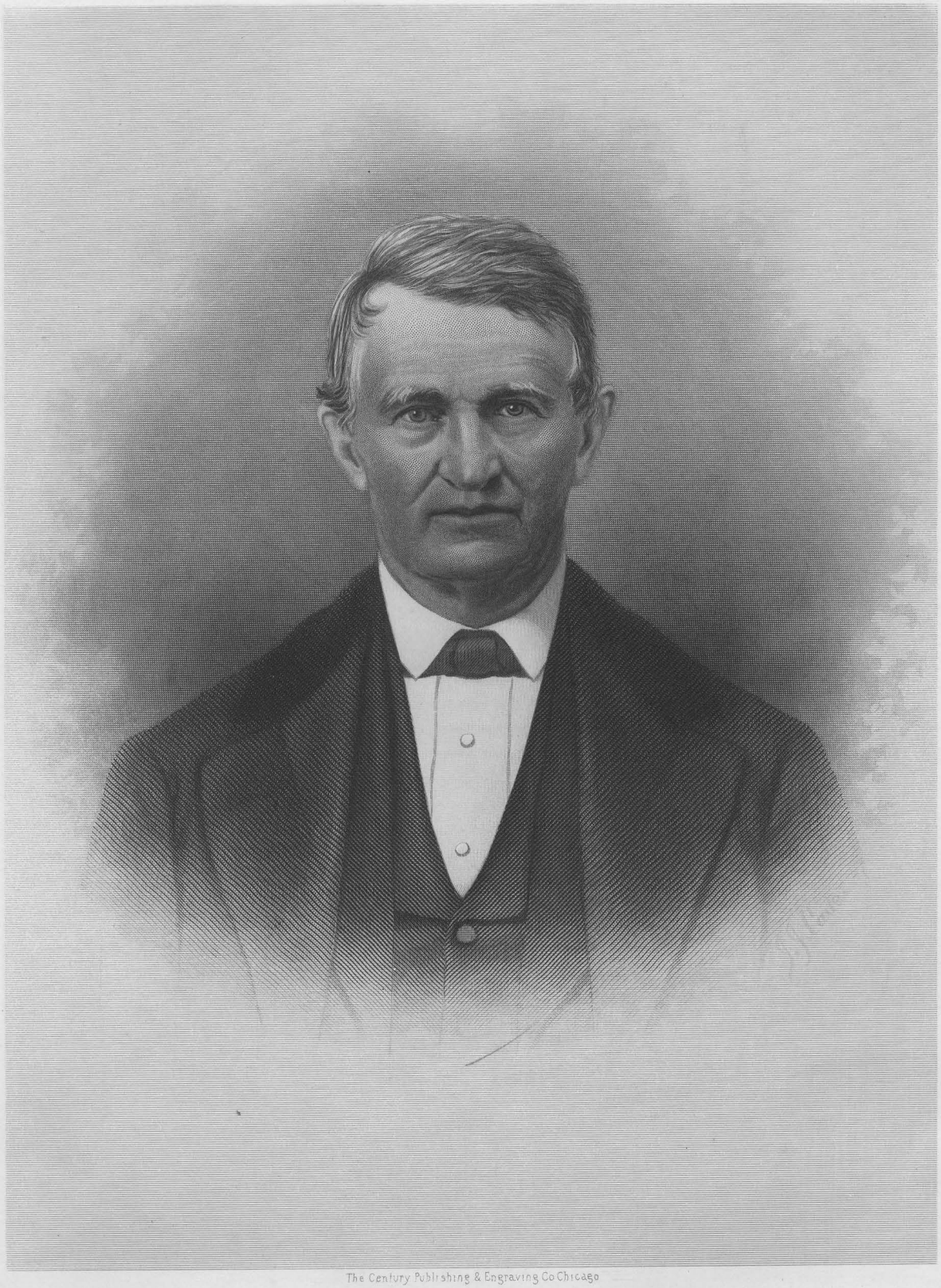
"Resolved, That as we recognize in this removal the hand of God, we also acknowledge his goodness to the State in sparing so long one who presided over her highest judicial tribunal with such marked ability and spotless integrity."

Judge Blackford's remains were interred in Crown Hill Cemetery, and at his grave stands a monument upon which is inscribed the leading events of his life, the inscription closing as follows: "THE HONORS THUS CONFERRED WERE THE JUST REWARDS OF AN INDUSTRY THAT NEVER WEARIED, OF AN INTEGRITY THAT WAS NEVER QUESTIONED."

BLACKFORD, Isaac Judge

4

P-S



The Century Publishing & Engraving Co Chicago

Isaac Blackford.

REFERENCE
DO NOT CIRCULATE

Isaac Newton Blackford

Son of Joseph Blackford (merchant at Bound Brook, N.J., b. c.1757; d. May 22, 1800; buried Bound Brook Presbyterian Cemetery) and Mary Staats Blackford (b. July 19, 1767; d. Aug. 18, 1827; married 2nd Thomas Coon of Bound Brook, N.J.)

Born Bound Brook, N.J. Nov. 6, 1786.

Died Washington, D.C. Dec. 31, 1859. (Buried Crown Hill Cemetery, Indianapolis)

Married Caroline McDonald, Daughter Col. Geo. McDonald, in the spring of 1820. (She died May 30, 1821 at Vincennes, Ind.)

Children: George; b. May 30, 1821; d. Lexington, Ky., about 1839.

Mr. Blackford entered Princeton as a Sophomore in May, 1804; he received the degree of A.M. in 1809 from Princeton. The Somerset Historical Quarterly, v.1 (Jan. 1916) published by A. Van Doren Honeyman of Plainfield, N.J., gives a good sketch of Judge Blackford, and gives correct information as to parents.

Judge Blackford's father, Joseph Blackford, was the son of Anthony Blackford who lived in Bound Brook as early as 1744, according to certain records. Mr. Honeyman, however, doubts this. Mr. Honeyman states further that Joseph Blackford had a brother Daniel who became a merchant, and died August 21, 1814. Joseph Blackford's will of March 26, 1800, probated June 18, 1800 (Trenton Wills, Book 39, p.46) gave all his real and personal estate equally to his wife, Mary (his sole executrix) and his son, Isaac, and an inventory of January 7th, 1801, shows a personalty of $7,220.99, mostly in store goods and accounts owing. The will proves that Judge Isaac Newton Blackford was the only son living at the time of the will. At that time he was 14 years of age, and if he had any brothers or sisters, they must have died at an early age.

Career:

Admitted to the bar N.J. 1810; went to Dayton, Ohio, but stayed only a short time; went to Indiana; 1812; settled first at Brookville, Ind.; settled Salem, Ind.; 1st clerk and recorder, Washington Co., Ind. 1813-14; greater portion of his life spent at Vincennes, Ind. 1815- practiced law Vincennes 1815- Clerk Territorial Legislature of Ind. 1813; Judge, 1st District Court 1814-15; Member Indiana Assembly 1816-17; Speaker Indiana Assembly 1816; Judge Supreme Court Indiana 1817-53; Judge U.S. Court of Claims, Washington, D.C. Mar.3, 1855-Dec. 29, 1859; Member Historical Society of Indiana; President Historical Society of Indiana, 1848; Candidate for Governor of Indiana in 1825 but was defeated.

PRINCETON UNIVERSITY
THE LIBRARY
PRINCETON NEW JERSEY

JULIAN P. BOYD, *Librarian*
LAWRENCE HEYL, *Associate Librarian*

October 30, 1940

Miss Florence Crawford, Librarian
Emeline Fairbanks Memorial Library
Terre Haute, Indiana

My dear Miss Crawford:

I am grateful to you for suggesting to Miss Helen Condit that the diploma of Isaac N. Blackford be presented to Princeton as you have told me in your letter of October 24.

The information on the two attached sheets has been prepared for you and I hope that Miss Condit will find this to be of help.

Very truly yours,

Lawrence Heyl
Associate Librarian

REFERENCE
DO NOT CIRCULATE

JUDGE ISAAC BLACKFORD

Sketch of the Most Distinguished of Indiana's Judges.

Not an Ordinary Man - His Rank in Politics and the Law
His Work on the Bench.

Isaac Blackford, for thirty-five years a judge of the Supreme Court of Indiana, was born at Bound Brook, Somerset county, New Jersey, November 6, 1786. When sixteen years old he entered Princeton College, from which, four years afterward, he graduated with honor. He then commenced the study of the law in the office of Colonel George McDonald, where he remained a year, and then entered that of Gabriel Ford, where he continued his legal studies. In 1810 he received his license, and two years afterward left New Jersey and came to Dayton, O. He remained there but a short time, and then came to Indiana. He stopped at Brookville a while, and then went to Salem and located. On the organization of Washington county, in 1813, he was chosen its first clerk and recorder. In after years he used to say that hisprincipal duty while filling these offices was the recording of marks. At that time there were few enclosures for stock, and, as it ran at large, it was important that it be so marked that it might be indentified by the owner; hence the marks. The next year Mr. Blackford was elected clerk of the Territorial Legislature, which office he resigned on being appointed judge of the First judicial circuit. He then removed to Vincennes, and in the fall of 1815 resigned the judgeship and opened a law office. The next year, 1816, he was elected a representative from the county of Knox to the first Legislature under the State government. There were many men in

that body who afterward became distinguished in the history of Indiana, among them James Noble, Amos Lane, John Dumont, Williamson Dunn, Davis Floyd, Samuel Milroy and Ratliff Boon, but even at that early day Judge Blackford's reputation for judicial fairness was so well established that he was chosen Speaker without a contest. The next year Governor Jennings appointed him a judge of the Supreme Court, a position he graced and honored for the next thirty-five years. In 1853, his term as Supreme judge having expired, he opened an office at Indianapolis for the practice of the law. He had been so long on the bench that he was illat ease when he went into court with a case. His effort to get into practice was not successful, and in a short time he measurably abandoned it. General Terrell narrates this amusing incident in Judge Blackford's career at this time: "One of his first cases was tried before a jury in the Marion Court of Common Pleas, Judge David Wallace, presiding. The testimony on both sides had been submitted, and as the day was far spent, court adjourned until next morning, when the attorneys were to make their arguments. Judge Blackford was on hand bright and early, apparently eager to proceed with the case. It was the first time in thirty-five years that he had appeared as an advocate before a jury. When the time came for him to make his argument, he arose with some trepidation, and thrusting his hand in his coat pocket for the manuscript of his speech, discovered to his astonishment, that he had left it in his office. Without the document he was entirely helpless, and he was compelled to beg the indulgence of the court and jury until he could go out and get it, which evidently much embarrassed and humiliated by the unfortunate

he was. He read his remarks in a stumbling, monotonous way, that probably made little impression on the minds of the 'twelve good and lawful' jurors, inasmuch as they brought in a verdict against him. It is not unlikely that this had some influence in his retirement from practice in the courts.

Judge Blackford was not at home at the bar, and he hoped and longed to be again upon the bench. The opportunity soon came. In 1855, on the organization of the Court of Claims at Washington, President Pierce appointed him one of its judges. He held this office until his death, December 31, 1859. He discharged its duties in a way that added luster to a name already illustrious, and died the best known and most eminent jurist Indiana has ever produced.

When Judge Blackford's death became known at Washington, a meeting of the Indiana congressional delegation was held to take action upon it. Albert G. Porter, then the representative from the Indianapolis district, in a speech delivered on that occasion said:

"It is hardly possible, sir, for persons who reside in an old community to appreciate the extent to which, in a new country, the character of a public man may be impressed upon the public mind. There is not a community in Indiana, not a single one, in which the name of Judge Blackford is not a household word. He has been identified with our State from the beginning; he may almost be said to be a part of our institutions. Judicial ability, judicial purity, approaching nearly to the idea of the divine; private worth, singularly blending the simplicity of childhood with the sober gravity of age - these were represented, not simply in the mind of

Indiana law profession, but in the universal popular mind of Indiana, in the person of Isaac Blackford."

At the same meeting General William McKee Dunn, then the representative from the Madison district, said: "For more than a quarter of a century Judge Blackford occupied a seat on the Supreme Bench of our State. He has done more than any tother man to build up our jurisprudence on the broad foundation of the common law. His reports are not only a honor to him, but to the State of Indiana also. It has been well said here that he was an "upright judge," and not only was he so in fact, but so careful was he of his judicial character and so regardful of all the proprieties of his position, that he was universally recognized and esteemed as 'an upright judge.'

"Indiana is proud of her great jurist, but to-day she mourns the loss of one of her most eminent citizens, and now by her united delagation in Congress claims that all that is mortal of Isaac Blackford may be entrusted to her care and have sepulture in her bosom. Let his body be borne back to the State with whose judicial history his name is inseparably connected, and there at its capital let him be buried, where those from all parts of the state who have so long known, revered and loved him may visit his tomb and pay affectionate tribute to his memory."

On Thursday, January 13, 1860, while the Democratic State convention was in session, Governor Willard announced to the convention that the remains of Judge Blackford had reached Indianapolis, and were then lying in state at the Senate chamber. He also said the

Judge's funeral would take place that afternoon, and invited the delegates to view the remains and attend the funeral. On the same day in Indianapolis the Indianapolis bar held a meeting in reference to his death, at which Judge Morrison presided and John H. Rea acted as secretary, John L. Ketcham, chairman of the committee on resolutions, reported a series, including the following, which were unanimously adopted:

Resolved, That while we received in the profoundest sorrow, the announcement of the decease of the late Hon. Isaac Blackford, we cherish for his memory the highest regard, acknowledging that he has contributed more than any other man in Indiana to the high character of her judicial reputation; that such judges are a blessing to any State, and deserve to be held in great respect by all the people.

Resolved, That, as we recognize in this removal the hand of God, we also acknowledge His goodness to the State in sparing so long one who presided over her highest judicial tribunal with such marked ability and spotless integrity.

Judge Blackford's remains have been interred in Crown Hill Cemetery, and at his grave stands a monument upon which is engraven the leading events of his life, the inscription closing as follows: "THE HONORS THUS CONFERRED WERE THE JUST REWARDS OF AN INDUSTRY THAT NEVER WEARIED, OF AN INTEGRITY THAT WAS NEVER QUESTIONED."

A year or so ago, Mr. D. S. Alexander, now Fifth Auditor of the Treasury at Washington, contributed a valuable paper on the life and character of Judge Blackford to the Southern Law Review. Mr. Alexander, however, does not do justice either to the natural talents or legal attainments of the distingushed jurist. He says that "at no time in his long career was he (Judge Blackford) esteemed a great lawyer or a profound jurist." Again: "He was in no sense a great man, and candor compels the admission that

in some respects he was a very ordinary man." I must take issue with Mr. Alexander on this subject. His verdict is not the verdict of the world. A man's ability can be determined by what he accomplishes in life. By this standard Judge Blackford was a great man, for he accomplished much. When he entered upon his public life there was no scarcity of able men about him. The pioneers of Indiana who recalled distinction, were all able, and most of them highly educated. It would have been impossible for one "not a great lawyer" to have reached Judge Blackford's eminence in judicature, and it would have been equally impossible for "a very ordinary man" so early in life to have attained his distinction in the politics of the State. While his talents were not of the highest order, they were good, and his great industry enabled him to accomplish more than many possessing greater natural parts.

In 1825, Judge Blackford was a candidate for Governor of Indiana, but was defeated by James Brown Ray by a majority of 2,622 votes. Subsequently, he was a candidate for United States senator, and was beaten by William Hendricks by a single vote.

Judge Blackford was very careful in his expenditure of money. He seldom parted with it without an equivalent.

In March, 1851, when Jenny Lind sang in the Madison pork-house, he went to Madison to hear her. There was much excitement the evening she sang over the sale of tickets, but he stood at the box office and patiently bided his time. When the bidding became he

slack, and the price of tickets dropped to $5, he made his purchase. He was not a benevolent man, but he seldom refused a contribution, when called on, for a charitable purpose.

Judge Blackford had an only son - George - whose mother died in giving him birth. The father was wrapped up in his boy. He was not an only child, but he was the only hope of perpetuating the Blackford name. This boy - this child and companion of the cloisteral jurist - sickened and died while at Lexington, Ky., under medical treatment of Dr. Dudley. The father went to Lexington and after seeing his boy laid away in his tomb, returned to his home. It was in the summer time, and he reached Indianapolis in the middle of the night. Instead of going to his room in the Circle, he went to the residence of Henry P. Coburn, and, without knocking, opened the door and entered the house, a house in which he was ever welcome. Soon afterward one of Mr. Coburn's sons was awakened by the stifled sobs of the mourner. He arose from his bed, and lighting a candle, beheld Judge Blackford, walking the floor and sobbing as though his heart would break. Not a word was said. The young man knew the cause of the great grief of his father's friend, and having no wish to intrude upon its sanctity, left the room. Judge Blackford remained at Mr. Coburn's for several days, and during the time held no conversation with any one. He took his meals in silence, and when they were over, returned to his room. When narrating this incident, General John Coburn said to the writer: "I have seen grief in all its forms; have seen the mother mourning for her son;

have seen the wife at the grave of her husband, and heard her sobs, but I have never seen such appalling agony as Judge Blackford exhibited that night at my father's house."

Judge Blackford Had a room in the old building which used to stand in the Governor's Circle, in which he lived for many years. It was plainly furnished, but it contained everything necessary for his comfort. There were three tables in it, and these were always loaded with books. William Franklin, a colored man still living, used to sweep the Judge's room, make his fires and do other necessary things about the house. He was with Judge Blackford twelve years, and says that, during that time, he never saw him in a passion, nor heard him utter an angry word. He nursed the Judge when he was sick, and attended to his little wants when he was sick, and attended to his little wants when he was well, and had the best of opportunities of knowing him as he really was.

Judge Blackford was prudish, in the manner of writing his opinions. The orthography must be perfect and the punctuation faultless, before the matter left his hands. One who knew him well says he paid as much attention to a comma as to a thought. He has been known to stop the press to correct the most trivial error, one that few would notice. The late Samuel Judah desiring to have a decision delayed, once asked him the correct spelling of a word he knew would be in the opinion. The judge answered, giving the usual orthography. Mr. Judah took issue with him and argued that the spelling was not correct. The Judge at once commenced an examination of the word, dug out its roots and carefully weighed all the

authorities he could find. He spent two days at this work, and before he got through, the court had adjourned and the case went over to the next term.

In politics Judge Blackford was originally a Whig, but in 1836 he supported Van Buren for the presidency, and afterward acted with the Democracy. He hated slavery, and during his whole life his influence was against it. Although the ordinance ceding the Northwestern Territory to United States, provided that slavery should never exist in the Territory or the States formed from it, it was covertly introduced into the Territory. Laws were passed authorizing the bringing of negroes into the Territory, and providing for apprenticing males until they were thirty-five years old and females until they were thirty-two. Children of colored persons born in the Territory might be apprenticed until the males were thirty and the females twenty-eight years old. It was also provided that slaves found ten miles from home without permission of their masters might be taken up and whipped with twenty-five lashes. Congress was petitioned to suspend the sixth articled of the ordinance of 1787 prohibiting slavery in the Territory, but happily without effect. General Harrison was Governor of the Territory, and approved of all these measures. He had about him, and enjoying his confidence, Waller Taylor, Thomas Randolph, and other immigrants from Virginia who were proslavery men of the most decided cast. Judge Blackford hated slavery in all its forms, and early allied himself with the free State party led by Jonathan Jennings. He held General Harrison responsible for the effort to make Indiana a slave Territory, and when the General

became a condidate for President, in 1836, Judge Blackford refused to support him. His action in this matter put him outside the Whig party and into the Democratic - a position he maintained while he lived.

Judge Blackford regarded Vincennes as his home for many years after he came to Indianapolis to live, and every year he spent a part of his time in that place. On one of his trips to Vincennes on horseback he came very near losing his life. Mounted on a stout horse, with overcoat, leggings and saddle-bag full of law books, he undertook to ford White river near Martinsville while the river was much swollen by a freshet. He and his horse were swept down the stream a great distance, but eventually they landed on an island. The judge was wet and cold, and it was several hours before he reached the mainland, being rescued by a farmer who had heard his outcries. He spent a couple of days in drying his law books and clothing, and in waiting for the waters to fall low enough for him to cross the river with safety, and then proceeded on his journey.

Judge Blackford was about five feet nine inches high, very erect, with a neat, trim, lithe figure; he was quick and active in motion, and graceful in bearing. His face was long, though well proportioned and marked with intelligence, sensibility and refinement. His head was small but shapely. He was upright and scrupulously honest in his dealings; was a model of integrity and purity of character. He had great reverence for the Sabbath, and nothing could swerve him from his purpose to do no work on Sunday.

He lived the greater part of his life alone, having the habits of a student and the tastes of a scholar.

His legal opinions were prepared with the greatest care and precision. They were written and rewritten until they were brought to his critical standard. So, too, with his reports of the decisions of the Supreme Court, eight volumes of which he published. Each syllabus was wrought out as a sculptor chisels his marble. He did not report all the decisions of the court - many were omitted. Those only were published which he regarded as sound and just on the general principles of the law. The result of this was his reports are authority wherever the courts recognize the common law as their rule of action. Since they were published a law has been passed compelling a report of all the opinions of the court. There have been so many contradictory opinions given since then that the authority of our highest court is not, relatively, as high as it was when its decisions were only known through Blackford's reports. Judge Blackford's reports were short and sententious, his style being clear and faultless. He did not write essays or treatises in his opinions, but treated of the essence of the case, and of nothing more.

Judge Blackford was not a member of any church, and he attended religious meetings wherever his taste or inclination led him. He was a believer in the Christian religion. He was, in short, a conscientious, modest, firm and incorruptible man. He was economical in habit, plain in dress, and unostentatious in manner. He was shy in deportment, avoided discussions, and made no enemies by his manner or treatment of men. He was a constant reader, and

had an excellent law library. He took the leading American and foreign magazines and carefully read them. He was great as a judge. He was not great as an advocate, or statesman, or scholar, or orator, or writer, but as a judge he stands in advance of any man our State has produced.

He was not a rapid thinker or powerful reasoner, but his sense of justice and fair dealing, his ability to weight legal arguments, his untiring perseverance in the investigation of cases put him in the front rank of Indiana judges, and there he will stand.

Without favor, fear or affection he held up the scales of justice before the world. His spotless rectitude and unswerving justice made his name a household word in Indiana - a state whose judicature he found in swaddling clothes and left clad in beautiful raiment.